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CEREBUS JAKA'S STORY 12

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125
AUG

NOTE • FROM • THE PRESIDENT

Caught this one on one of those putrescent *Current Affairs* type shows. Seems there's a child who was born without a brain (hold-on; it's Life-Affirming stuff here) just a brain stem, so he has a life support battery, is able to push himself around while lying on his back, responds to sound, light, etc.
I swear they dead-panned the voice-over on the next bit; the kid loves the Disney Channel.
You know, I'm not one bit surprised.

★★★★★

A story Big Name Novelist tells about his screen-writing days. It's a quickie. Big bucks movie producer, (waving a foot-long cigar, of course): "There's this dumb gorgeous broad, comes to Hollywood and wants to be in a movie *real* bad, but she's so dumb (how dumb is she?) She's so dumb ... SHE FUCKS THE WRITER."

★★★★★

Writer working on a book about the Sicilian Catholic Church and how it differs from the Catholic Church elsewhere. Example; the crucified Jesus on the altar in Sicilian Catholic Churches is always shown to be in *excruciating* pain. Writer asks a little old woman in one of the churches why Jesus is always portrayed in agony. "He was *unkind* to his *mother*," was her reply.

★★★★★

We're still trying to get caught up so here's Max Beerbohm's caricature of Wilde during his Emperor Nero period. Thanks to Alan Moore for the book it was in.

CEREBUS

NO. 125 AUGUST 1989

DAVE SIM
President

GERHARD
Vice-President

MONIQUE KAPTEIN
Administrative Assistant

JAKA'S STORY
a novel

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PROLOGUE
(Cerebus 114)

•

POGROM'S PROGRESS
(Cerebus 115 to Cerebus 119)

•

THE POET
(Cerebus 120 to Cerebus 130)

•

MYSTERY ACHIEVEMENT
(Cerebus 131 to Cerebus 136)

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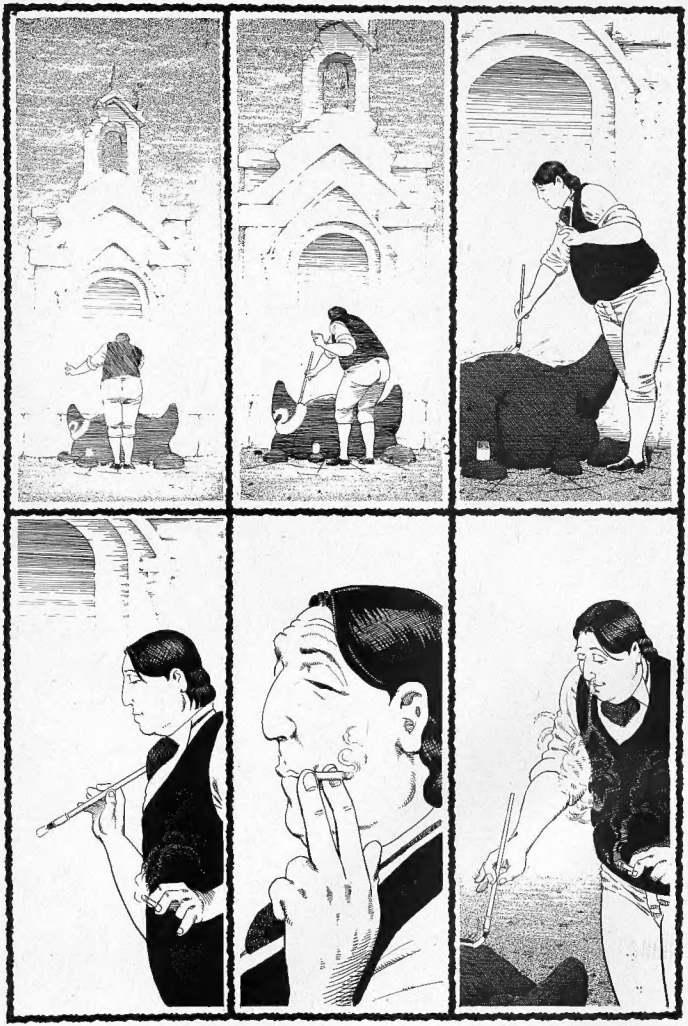
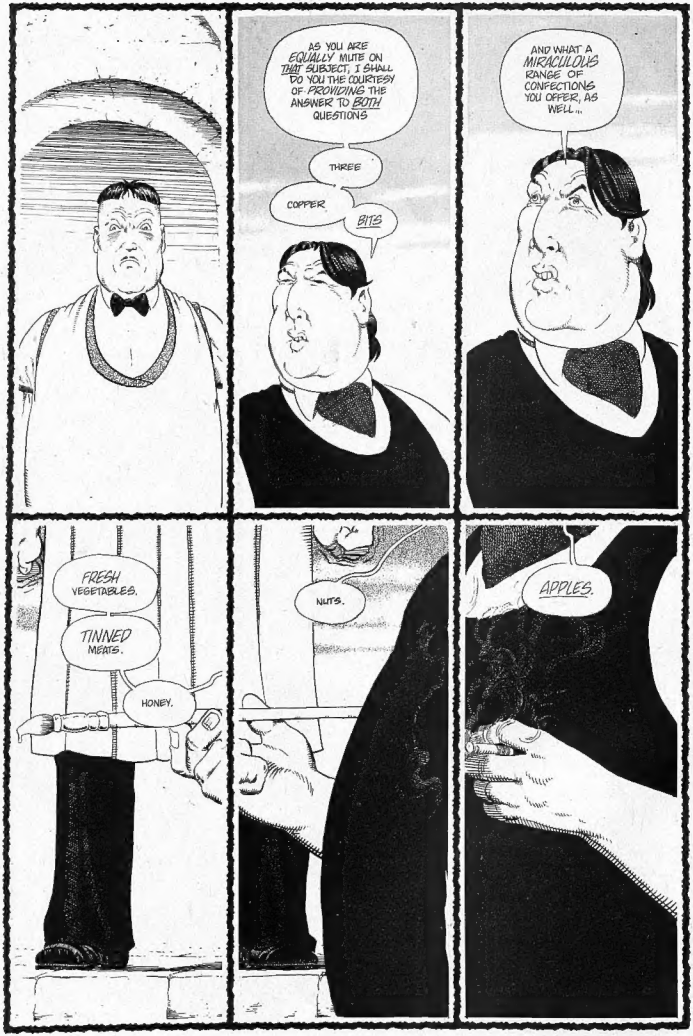


HEY! HEY YOU NOW!!
YOU'RE DEFACING MY PROPERTY!! I'LL HAVE YOU IN THE LOCK-UP!!
THIS PARTICULAR HEAD, WITHERS, HAS BEEN GOOD ENOUGH TO CHOOSE THE PUBLIC ROAD WAY AS A RESTING PLACE
IT IS...
THEREFORE...
NOT CONSIDERED PROPERTY BY THE BENEFICENT LAWS OF OUR BELOVED MATRIARCHAL OCCUPATIONAL GOVERNMENT
I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT HAD IT INDEED SOUGHT AND FOUND REFUGE SEVERAL FEET AWAY... AND IN SO DOING HAD DEMONSTRATED SUCH UNSOUND JUDGEMENT AS TO BECOME 'YOUR PROPERTY';
THERE EXISTS NO FORCE ON EARTH THAT MIGHT IMPEL ME TO TOUCH IT; DECORATE IT; NOR IN ANY WAY ACKNOWLEDGE ITS PHYSICAL EXISTENCE BY EITHER WORD OR DEED...

I SHOULD BE LOATHE TO EVEN GLANCE IN ITS DIRECTION, LEST
GORGON-LIKE
IT MIGHT TURN ME TO STONE OR... A PILLAR OF SALT...
OR SOME SUCH
SOMDOMITE!
THE CORRECT PRONUNCIATION
WITHERS
IS 'SODOMITE'

I HAVE ALWAYS FOUND THE SLOPE-BROWED MORALITY OF THE GRAND IESTAN PUBLIC TO BE QUITE BENEATH MY NOTICE...
LET ALONE MY CONTEMPT ...
HAVING ROUSED MY CONTEMPT I WONDER IF YOU MIGHT BE SO OBLIGING AS TO ANSWER A QUESTION FOR ME
HOW MUCH DO YOU PAY YOUR LITTLE MRS. NASH TO... 'DANCE'... FOR YOU?
AS THERE SEEMS TO BE NO ANSWER FORTHCOMING PERHAPS ANOTHER QUERY MIGHT BE MORE TO YOUR LIKING...
HOW MUCH DO YOU CHARGE THE NASHES FOR THEIR DAILY BREADS


AS YOU ARE EQUALLY MUTE ON THAT SUBJECT, I SHALL DO YOU THE COURTESY OF PROVIDING THE ANSWER TO BOTH QUESTIONS
THREE
COPPER
BITS
AND WHAT A MIRACULOUS RANGE OF CONFECTIONS YOU OFFER, AS WELL...
FRESH VEGETABLES.
TINNED MEATS.
HONEY.
NUTS.
APPLES.

WHAT ARE APPLES FETCHING ON THE BLACK MARKET THESE DAYS?
TWENTY COPPER BITS?
FIFTY?
GENTLEMEN DON'T CALL EACH OTHER NAMES WITHERS
SO...
TO SPARE ME THE STIGMA OF BEING FORCED TO CONDUCT MYSELF IN AN UNGENTLEMANLY FASHION...
PERHAPS YOU WOULD BE SO GOOD AS TO THINK OF AN APPROPRIATE NAME...
FOR YOURSELF!

THAT SAME SCENT of sweet potency followed as she exited the Hidden Room by means of the Locked Door. Its fragrance intensified as her footsteps echoed quietly through the confines of the entryway making their way to the outer portico. Far from being either diminished or dissipated in the outdoor air, the aroma mingled with the scent of those fresh, spring blossoms swaying gently in the warm, morning breeze.

She inhaled, drinking deeply of the sweet taste of freedom in every fibre of her being. Those colours which surrounded her; the creamy whites and blazing crimsons of the roses; the hibiscus, violet and ostentatious; the understated narcissus and its perfect brothers, the daffodil and the jonquil; those colours seemed richer somehow, more sharply defined as if in emphasis of this joyous day of her liberation.

She espied Nurse approaching even before she could hear that ominous tread that had been so long synonymous with fear in her heart. The ponderous swaying motion, the massive head listing first right, then left, the flabby jowls following the pendulous movement; slightly delayed so that they seemed twin pink puppies, following in their bitch's traces, mistaking her rhythm endlessly and so, endlessly, underfoot. Not surprisingly, the effect was quite comical and Jaka smiled.

Nurse followed the perimeter of the largest and most centrally located of the garden's displays. It was a circular patch of the most exotic and rarest flowers, planted and grown at prohibitive expense and with laborious care in the shape of the Travers' family's coat of arms; each bud selected for its perfect match with the required colour; all natural except for the green of the Jester's livery in the upper right corner (there existing no such thing as a naturally-occurring green flower; a fact which had made necessary both the demotion of the Senior Gardener to Executive Director of Inland Revenue as well as the institution of a monthly ritual involving a complicated combination of cranes, winches, spray bottles, food dye and nearly super-human patience).

It was at a point geometrically opposite Jaka's position that Nurse paused, glancing up, and noticed her young charge (arms folded, skirt rising and billowing slightly) regarding her approach with apparent equanimity. Nurse's visage darkened, and from where Jaka stood, several hundred meters removed, her guardian seemed to swell within her black apparel, adding inches to her height and pounds to her already considerable body mass.

Her arms began pumping furiously; her brow furrowed with rage; the pitch and yaw of her head redoubled, the pink puppies tumbling quite madly about the thin line of her mouth as she endeavoured to circumnavigate the floral display by the shortest route possible. Even at peak cruising speed (which, it might be added, she had attained in the first few moments) it was a journey of some several minutes.

IN THE SPACE OF those few minutes as Jaka contemplated the bustling and ridiculous figure huffing and puffing her way about the circumference of the flower bed, every few seconds casting a venemous and withering look in Jaka's direction, the relationship between the two changed quite suddenly and quite irrevocably. The slight tremor of apprehension which had welled up within the eleven-year-old when first she had noticed Nurse's approach subsided completely, replaced by a new reserve; a sense of imperturbable self, very much in keeping with the aristocratic blood flowing within her veins. "I," she thought to herself as Nurse rounded the clubhouse turn, "am Lord Julius' niece." Her arms relaxed slightly, though no movement was visibly evident. "*She*," Jaka added, narrowing her gaze with a careless disregard for Nurse's imminent arrival, "is hired help." Nurse, her face glistening with perspiration, her breath rasping loudly, waddled the last few steps (peak cruising speed having gone the way of all entropy) to a place directly before the young girl at the foot of the small flight of steps which led to the Family Quarters. The realization that Jaka in no way intended fleeing in abject terror indicated to the stout and malicious Nurse that the occasion called for loud, eloquent and abusive oratory on a scale never previously attempted. Her mouth opened; her eyes flashed with a burning malignancy.

At that moment, however, she chose to look Jaka squarely in the face for the first time in many years What she saw there was a thing whose coming she had dreaded even as she had acknowledged (grudgingly) its inevitability. That was, of course, the onset of the unmistakeable and quite idiosyncratic air of Travers Womanhood, a demeanor which, self-evidently, would brook no denial

In mid-expression, Nurse's mouth (half-open, an oath frozen at the back of her throat) fluttered once, twice, and then closed resolutely into a thin, sulking line which (had a mirror been present before her) she would have recognized as a characteristic expression from Jaka's earliest years, used exclusively by the child on those occasions when she felt Missy had been withheld from her too long after breakfast.

"Ishan't be needing you, until it's time for my lessons," said Jaka, her eyes locked onto Nurse's, matching withering look for withering look, burning gaze for burning gaze. "You will accompany me to the school-room and then you will wait for me outside."

Nurse made a final attempt to reassert her dominion over the young girl. She made herself think of Men; Their Swinish Behaviour; Their Drunken Ways; Their Barnyard Lusts and felt her anger, black and terrible climbing up, up from her heart, squeezing out through those twin portals that have been called windows onto the soul

Jaka blinked once, with theatrical slowness.

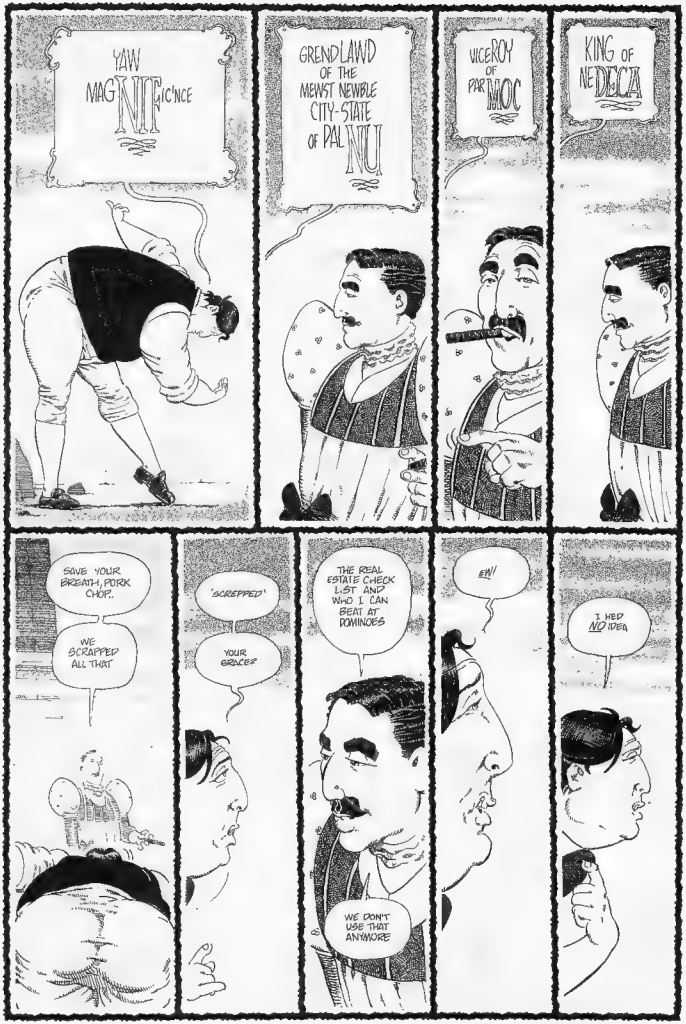
"Yes, Miss," said Nurse; and as she turned away, Jaka noticed for the first time that her guardian's hair, once black as pitch, was streaked and lined with shades of white and grey.

STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
CLIK KAK SLAM
PST. PST.
HEY, FAT BOY...
GOT A LIGHT?

I CAN'T SAY THAT I RECOGNIZE YOU, BUT YOUR MANNER IS QUITE FAMILIAR
IS THAT SO?
I'LL BET YOU SAY THAT TO ALL THE GIRLS ...
MIGHT I MAKE SO BOLD AS TO ENQUIRE AFTER THE IDENTITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO WHOM...
I AM LOWERING MYSELF?
CAN YOU... KEEP A SECRET?

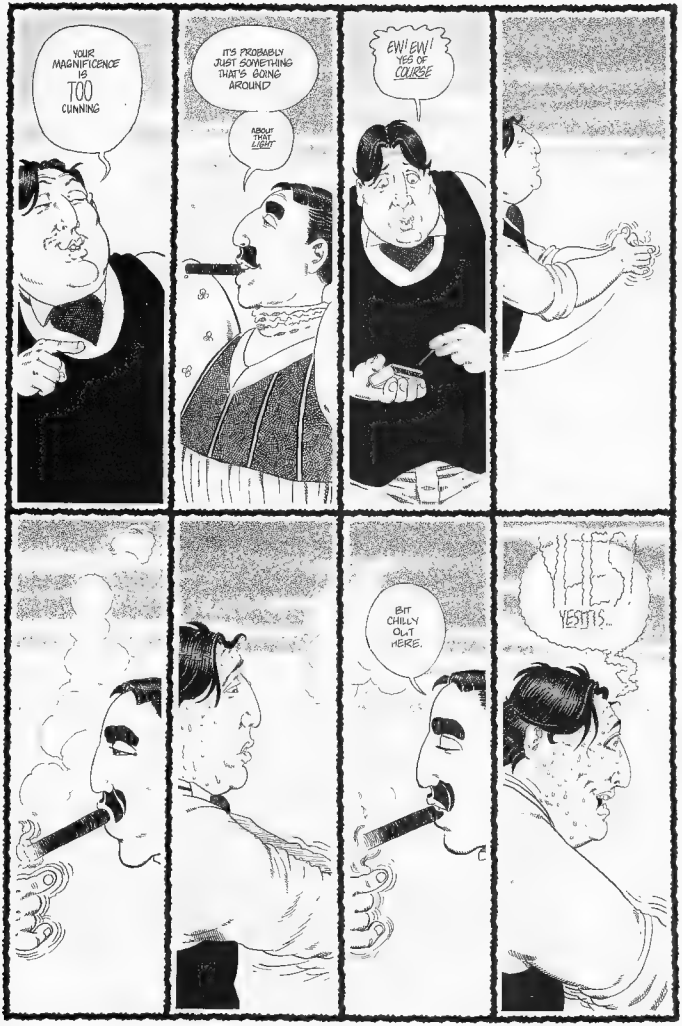
I'M A GENTLEMAN
OF COURSE I CAN'T KEEP A SECRET
WELL THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.
YOU PROBABLY GUESSED ALREADY
BUT, WELL...
I'M JAKA'S SWEET OLD AUNT VICTORIA
AWNT VICTORIA?
AH!
SO SHE HAS MENTIONED ME!
NONSENSE
YOU ARE QUITE PLAINLY OF THE MAGNUMINE PERSUASION
YOU MUST MEAN...
MY GOOD MAN
THAT YOU'RE JAKA'S ...

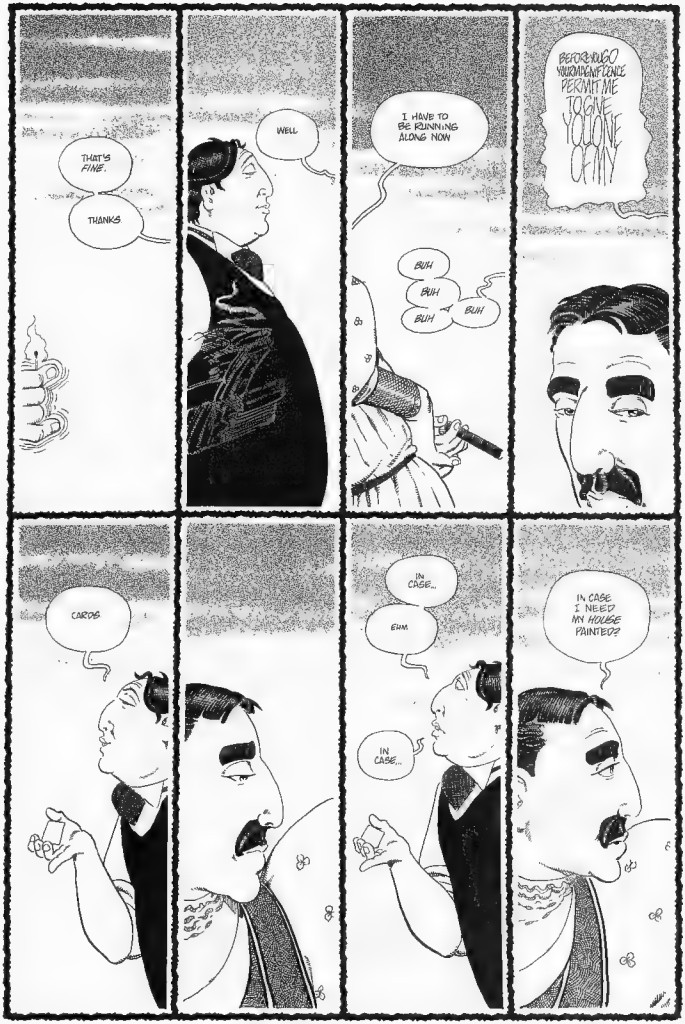
CLAK
CLAKAKLAK
PST
GOOD HIVVENS
YOU'RE
PLEASE!
NO NAMES ...
THE HILLS THEMSELVES HAVE EARS
AN' ALL TH.S TIME I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST A COLOURFUL EXPRESSION


YAW MAGNIFIC'NCE
GREND LAWD OF THE MEWST NEWBLE CITY-STATE OF PAL NU
VICEROY OF PAR MOC
KING OF NE DECA
SAVE YOUR BREATH, PORK CHOP..
WE SCRAPPED ALL THAT
'SCREPPED'
YOUR BRACES?
THE REAL ESTATE CHECK LIST AND WHO I CAN BEAT AT DOMINOES
WE DON'T USE THAT ANYMORE
EH!
I HED NO IDEA

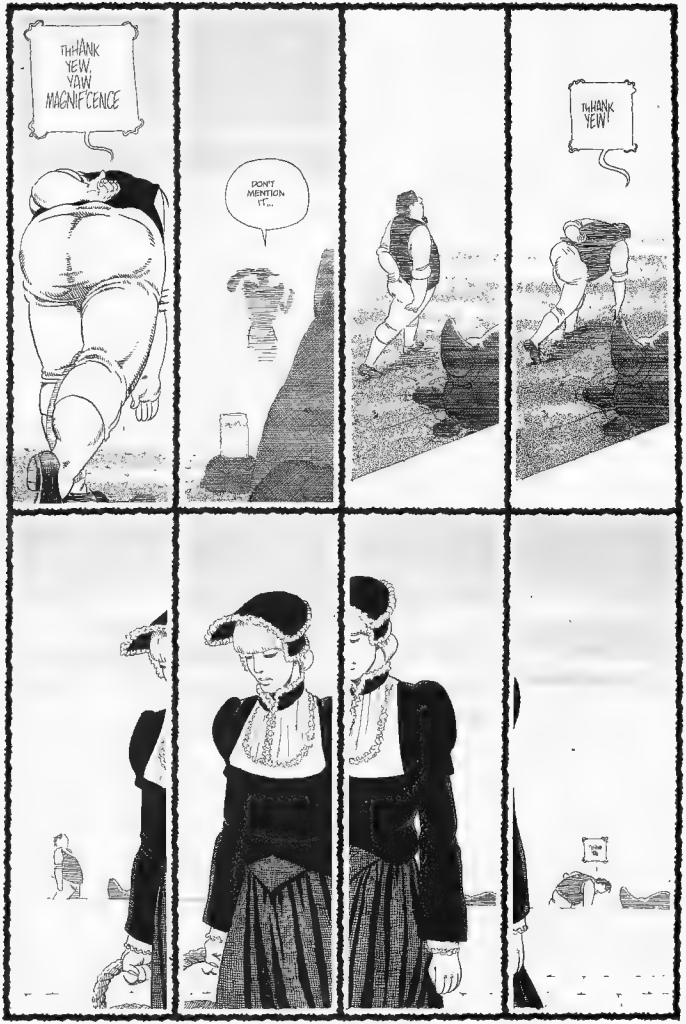
MIGHT I INQUIRE AS TO THE CURRENT PROTOCOL FOR AN UNOFFICIAL ...
HOLD UP YOUR INDEX FINGER ..
OTHER ONE...
ATTABOY
NOW STICK IT IN YOUR MOUTH AND GET IT NICE AND WET
THAT'S THE TICKET
NOW STICK THE FINGER IN YOUR LEFT EAR
WIGGLE IT UP AND DOWN
AND SAY

' WET WILLY WET WILLY '
WHET WHILLY WHET WHILLY...
LOUDER
" I WANT A BIG BLACK WET WILLY '
I WHANT A BHIG...
M'HAW HAW
POP


YOUR MAGNIFICENCE IS TOO CUNNING
IT'S PROBABLY JUST SOMETHING THAT'S GOING AROUND
ABOUT THAT LIGHT
EW! EW! YES OF COURSE
BIT CHILLY OUT HERE.
YES!!! YES!!! YES!!!


THAT'S FINE.
THANKS
WELL
I HAVE TO BE RUNNING ALONG NOW
BUH
BUH
BUH
BUH
BEFORE I GO YOUR EXCELLENCE PERMIT ME TO GIVE YOU ONE OF MY
CARLOS
IN CASE...
EHM
IN CASE...
IN CASE I NEED MY HOUSE PAINTED?

NO NO NO
'N CASE
IN CASE I NEED SOME HEAVY LIFTING DONE?
NO NO NO
'N CASE
IN CASE I'M HAVING A BIG PARTY WITH LOTS OF FREE FOOD AND LIQUOR, HALF THE NOBILITY IN ESTARCION, SUMPTUOUS FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS AND A BUNCH OF NINETEEN-YEAR-OLD GROOMS AND VALETS FROLICKING ON THE CAREFULLY-MANICURED LAWNS?
...OH!
...OR IN CASE I NEED SOMEONE TO MOVE INTO ONE OF THE LARGER SUITES AND JUST KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS FOR A FEW MONTHS?
OOHHHH
YESSS
I'LL GIVE THIS TO MY GIRL AND SHE'LL LET YOU KNOW THE MINUTE SOMETHING OPENS UP...


THHANK YEW, YAW MAGNIFICENCE
DON'T MENTION IT...
THHANK YEW!

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dammit, David,

I've been reading Cerebus for quite some time now, and every issue I've looked forward to watching you slam someone in the letter column. Don't get me wrong, but it's pure sadistic fun. *Suddenly*, come issue 122, you're wishing people luck (good luck, at that!), calling people "charming" and "just fine", and even *thanking* them for their letters! And this has been the downright *lamest* batch in a long while ... quite deserving of a good verbal assault, or at least the obscene one-liners that they set themselves up for! Now, David, I'm sorry (as I'm sure we *all* are) that you and Zee broke up - you have my deepest sympathies, believe me - but *PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE!!!* SLAM someone!!! I literally *writhe* when I see you use the word "gosh" in a serious manner!

Call me an ass, please!

Generic Mike
293-C Wilson Hill Road
Binghamton, NY
13905

Gosh, Generic Mike. I couldn't do *that*.

★★★★★

Hey buttercup!

What Cerebus' letter column needs is a new set of regulars. Like Saturday Night Live, the old cast (Bob, Mike, Derek 'n Rob, Connie and Mike Dupress (He's a man! He's a man!)) seems to have moved on to bigger and better things. I declare on this occasion the formation of the New Generation of Aardvark Comment Persona (NGACP) with myself at the head of the table.

Let's hear 'em, people.

Roll out.

Lee F. Shedden
9301 Greive Dr.
Vernon, B.C.
V1B 2S2

★★★★★

Dave, A Chara.

I knew Oscar needed the work, being dead beyond his means, but underbilled beneath an aardvark? How dreary. I hope he can linger about as long as that American burlesque artist with the false moustache. Incidentally, should any nondescript persons out there be thinking you have an easy time casting new dramatis personae, allow me to point out to these undiscerning ones the difference between a mere caricature and a true portrait. No one has ever accused Da Vinci of being a rip off artist merely because he used a model for that painting of the smiling woman.

Since everyone else is jawing about the Church and State "Finally", I'd like to point out your obvious reliance on Joseph Campbell's "Hero With A Thousand Faces," taking literally, as it were, his chapter on the "Ascension of the Hero." Or perhaps you did it unconsciously, which would prove Campbell right. Which is it, or wouldn't you rather say?

Your acquaintance with Oscar may well predate mine, but do your uninitiated readers know (1) That he was strong as a bull?; upon being bodily assaulted by several ruffians at university, who deemed him too effeminate, he picked them up, carried them to their rooms, buried them beneath a pile of their own furniture, and invited onlookers to sample their wines. (2) That the nasty fellow who prosecuted him during that horrible morality trial (quite right, trials are neither moral or immoral) was Edward Carson, the architect of modern Irish partition, who had not only been at Trinity with Oscar, but had also built sandcastles with him at the beach when they were both small (not that Sir Edward was ever anything *but*)? (3) That Oscar was the name of the strongest member of the Fianna, the legendary band of heroes led by Finn M'Coul (which would seem to tie back to (1))? Above all, they should know he was Irish, and that the hint of a brogue was always lurking at the back of his most polished epigrams. Brendan Behan actually wrote an elegy to him in Gaelic, which Behan's biographer translated. Do you know it? I've enclosed a copy For Your Inhalation. If you have another casting call, you could do worse than to give Behan a ring, I'm sure he and Cerebus could find at least one activity in common.

Looking forward to the rest of your production of "The Wilde, The Innocent, and the Earth Pig Shuffle." Wish you'd said that? You will, Dave, you will.

Slainte!
O'Loighn
New York, NY

I had not read Behan's poem and cannot thank you enough for sending me the copy. So eloquent. Finding poetry in that tortured demise so eloquently described by ... that little Ross fellow? They all run together ... at the conclusion of Wilde's Collected Letters.

I'll be delighted to say. Campbell was right.

I'm sure my uninitiated boys (what a damnable vocation this is for a confirmed heterosexualist) will find your facts illuminating (1) I have found the university story in many forms and as one can hardly picture Oxford gentlemen lying outright (en masse, anyway) it is only the degree of mayhem perpetrated by Speranza's youngest son and the number of bully victims (one pictures young Ronald Reagan as the Ring-leader) that might be questioned, (2) the very largest of the Small. The protector of upper class English sensibilities. (3) I didn't know this.

I have inscribed "The Wilde, The Innocent and the Earth Pig Shuffle" on the cuff of my best shirt and will use it at dinner in Coventry when the first opportunity presents itself. Without attribution of course.

★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I want to say something to all the other Varkies who, like me, were born in 1959:

In the Chinese system of astrology, each year is named for one of 12 animals (rat, ox, tiger, cat, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog and ... pig!) People are also said to have the characteristics of the animal in whose year they were born.

This is the year of the snake (elegant, secretive and lazy); next year will be the year of the horse (outgoing, enthusiastic and impatient). 1959 was the year of the pig (honest, forthright and self-indulgent), as were 1935, 1947, 1971 and 1983.

Nor is that all ... each year is ruled by one of 5 elements (fire, metal, water, wood and ... earth). The past two years were ruled by earth and the next two will be ruled by metal. 1959 was ruled by earth.

I'm sure you all know what's coming next: WE ... ARE ... ALL ACTUALLY ... ALSO ... earth pigs born!!!!

Dave Sim himself cannot make that statement truthfully (unless you, too, were born in 1959????)

Yours in Pope Cerebus

Sharon Malloy
523 Portugal Cove Road
St. John's, Newfoundland

★★★★★

"Blue Velvet is an interesting movie..."

Well, Dave, it is me again, Jim Smith. I was reading Cerebus #123 and just felt compelled to write. At last, the true nature of Pud Withers is beginning to see the light of day. You, of course, indicated from the beginning that Pud held sexual longings for Jaka, but it would have seemed that they were those that many men would have held. Now, the fantasies are moving into the realm of domination over a woman that would seem to be vulnerable. A dark foreshadowing perhaps.

The question that arises and bothers me is whether or not ol' Pud will begin to act out his fantasies. It is fairly obvious that Pud is a wee bit deficient in the mental department. Naw, I take that back. Pud is fucking nuts. Wonder if he was always like this or did the death of his wife unhinge him? But wait, how do we know his wife is dead? Maybe she left his butt to join the Cirinists and live with a left-handed black lesbian Eskimo just to get some normality into her life. Hell, maybe he didn't even have a wife. Probably just a couple pounds of cold liver. Eeeeuuuuuwuwuuuwww.

And what of Oscar? Just who does he love? One might think that Oscar was attracted to Rick, but this may not necessarily be so. Appearances and action may be deceiving in the case of the Poet. After all, Oscar would be attracted to great beauty and art. In Jaka the two are one. It may even be that Oscar desires both Jaka and Rick. What an interesting triangle that would make. Yet, I feel that Oscar loves no one but himself. Hmmm.

"But you wouldn't want to live it."

Jim Smith
P.O. Box 1644
Wise, VA
24293

★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Pay no attention to that Beauregard Leialoha nonsense. We disowned him years ago. It's all lies.

Aloha,

Big Kahuna Kaleimamahu "Butch" Leialoha.

Nanukuli, Hawaii

P S. Mai Ka Po Mai 'Oi'A'I'O!

P.S.S. That's Hawaiian for (more or less): We know where you live.

★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I just thought you might want to know that I'm here in the Egyptian desert working on uncovering a story so radical, so unheard-of, so stunning, that it will blow the lid off of the entire comic industry forever! This story is so groundbreaking that I can only trust independant comics like yours with even the tiniest bits of information about it. And, when uncovered, it will change the comic world irrevocably.

Stay tuned.

Fnord,
The reporter at large.
Cairo

★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I was just sitting around, listening to Iggy Pops' Live at the Channel album. He finished singing Penetration and as the band began Power and Freedom, Iggy says, "It really means a lot that you came. I'm really thankful that you showed up. We're going to work real hard for you and rock it straight, no bullshit."

Kind of says it all, don't you think? Of course, later, during the song Tuff Baby he asks, "Hey, do you wanna see my willy?" and then as the band is bashing out the opening chords to I Wanna Be Your Dog, Iggy says "I'm proud to be a dog.", so maybe he hasn't said it all.

Sincerely,

George Kalogeris

★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I would write, but I've got a pounding headache.

James Lloyd
Vernon, B.C.

★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Batman is the fucking antichrist.

I walk 5 miles to this comic store to buy, among other things, Cerebus and the bi-weekly reprints. 5 fucking miles. I get to this joint and what do I find? 2 copies of #123, and the latest bi-weekly they've got is #12. In contrast, what do you think they had almost a whole wall of? You guessed it ... Batshit.

The Asshole gets himself a movie that's a hit, and now he's all over the place. 5 million copies of every Batproduct, Batposters and Batshirts everywhere you look. All this in glorification of what is basically an incredibly dull comic; " ... but just in time the Caped Crusader TM remembers the secret Batweapon in his utility belt and saves the world in time for page 32. Again."

Now, I admit, at first I was taken in; I went and saw Batman, opening night, on acid, just like a lot of poor slobs out there (well, maybe not a whole lot). I even went and saw it a second time (mostly because I didn't remember a whole lot of the first time). But now, Dave, now it's gone too damn far. When a muscle-bound schnook like Batman (I refuse to dignify the bastard by calling him "THE Batman") can monopolize the market to the near-exclusion of smaller works like Cerebus and even to the detriment of the previous big-name frontrunner (that idiot with the claws) something has to be done. Excuse me, I have to go shopping for a rocket-laucher now.

Yours in exasperation,

John Meeker.
P.S. I really like Jaka's story, anyway.

★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I'd write to That's Entertainment personally, but since my name and credit rating have been maligned publicly, I'd like to make use of your letter column to set this matter straight. I do not owe That's Entertainment of Worcester, MA eleven dollars. I *do not* owe That's Entertainment *ANYTHING!*

One of my last acts in that god Forsakentown, prior to moving to Boston, was to go into the shop and wipe out my debt. I had wanted to say goodbye to Paul-the-owner, but he was taking one of his many days off. I paid the $ to one David Lynch who then assured me that my "card" would be torn up. My girlfriend Nicole (who, Paul will be happy to know, has grown her hair back to nearly its original length) was with me at the time, and, although she doesn't remember the incident (you know how some girlfriends can be in comic shops), believes me none the less.

So there,

Rob Lavender.

P.S. Thank you for your swift response, the nifty sketch, and the touching sentiment on #120. Bruce loved it.

The inscription on Bruce's wedding present of an autographed #120 was "Remember! Alimony is just retroactive prostitution."

★★★★★

Dave,

Paper money, huh. Transparent skirts on young Jaka, huh (woo). Looking back on some recent issues, I've got to thinking. Now, me personally, I don't think that putting bare tits and sex and lots of blood in a comic book makes it any more "Adult". (Does tend to get the pages stuck together though. Oh, that's not what I meant. Speaking of which, a female wanker wouldn't really be *wanking*, would she? What's the proper term for this?) But I wonder if being sorta coy, sorta Here's a sexy woman getting buck nekkid but here's these strategically placed locks of hair, towels, furniture, etc. is that much better artistically speaking. I don't know. I mean, I'm just asking what you happen to think.

Is "Melodrama. Cheap. Common. Melodrama.", is that, anything like, y'know, "MELODRAMA EXPENSIVE?"

This girlfriend thing seems to be going around. Three of my friends just ended long-term relationships, and another is in the midst of that breaking up deal. Me, I don't have these problems. But that story is for a time which does not happen to be right now.

I was considering sending you a bag of Smartfood Popcorn, but then I said to myself, "Do I have such an excess of time and money that I have nothing better to spend them on than sending Smartfood Popcorn to a guy I've never even met, only seen once Grand Marshalling the Thanksgiving Day Parade and that wasn't even him or even someone bearing a passing resemblance to him? Besides, thirty thousand other people probably had the same idea. And besides *that*, would I eat a bag of popcorn sent to me by a complete stranger, even if it did *not* have a dusting of suspicious whitish cheesy powder? Is it even all that wonderful?

I hate it when people write "Gotta go" as a way of closing a letter. "Gotta go." As though they couldn't put it down and finish writing later. It's not like talking on the phone. "Gotta go." Feh! Well, I don't gotta go; I have nothing else to do. But I'm gonna go just because I feel like it. I mean, take no measure of offense, but, well, I'm pretty sure you understand.

Scott Klopfer
74 W 68st
New York, NY
10023

★★★★★

Dear Dave,

No.

I will not buy Cerebus any longer if what I think is going to happen is going to happen. You can ply me with cheap ale, promise to give me Natalie Merchant's phone number, but I will not buy it.

I mean look at Pud.

He's got crazed rapist stamped in neon on his face. I look at him, and I see where this is all going. Jaka being thrown on the floor ... Not to Jaka, at least. I love Jaka. *You* love Jaka. Ger loves Jaka.

You could get yourself one of those 900 numbers. 'Who Shall Pud Slam His Withered Salami Into?' Let us decide. Or just let Oscar get him drunk one night.

Don't do it, Dave. Pretty please.

Jesus, Sim, I'm begging you !!!!! DON'T!!!!!

.... Then again, that particular rape issue might be worth a few bucks. Ah well, whatever happens, happens.

TWIST
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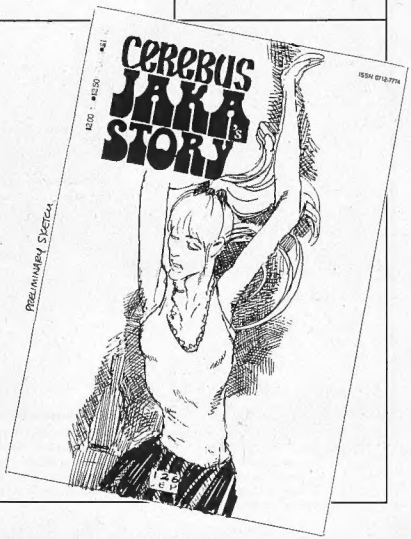

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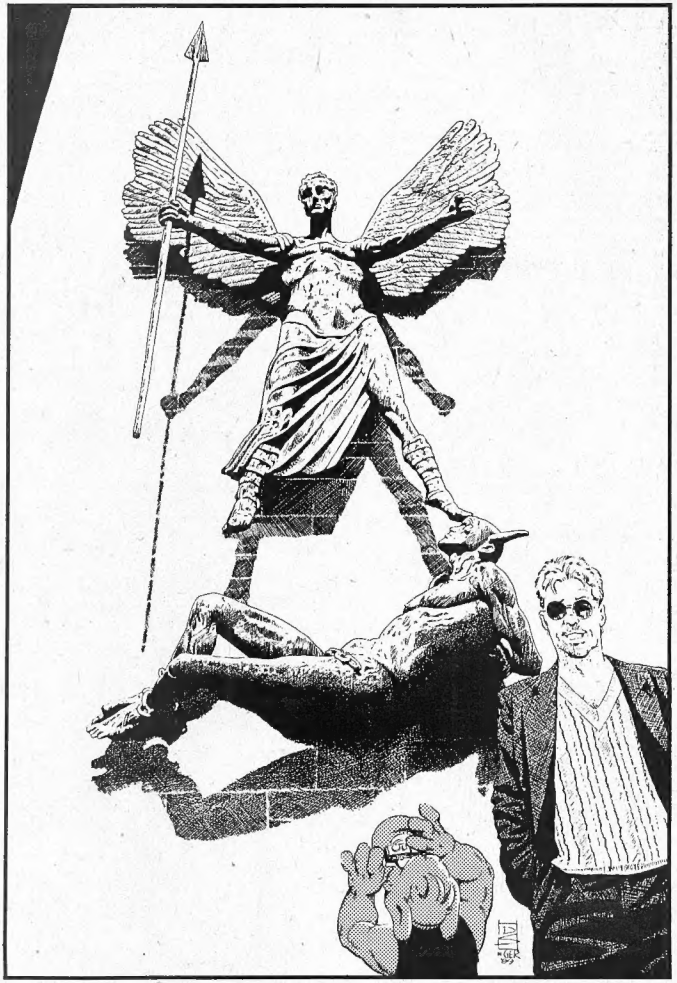
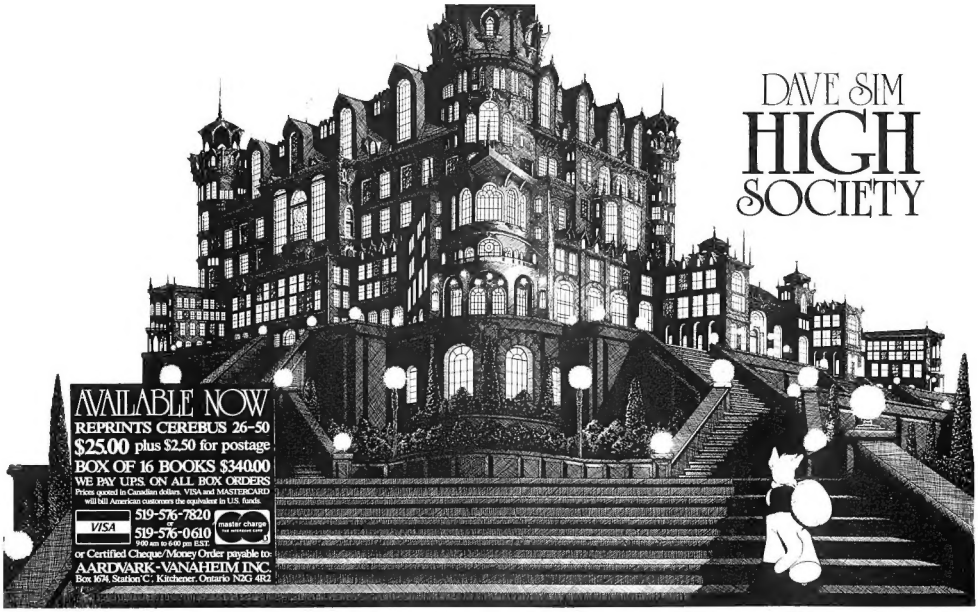


The cover of *Fantasy Advertiser* #115 which features an interview with me about (of all things) my work on Cerebus. It was drawn from a photo Ger took in Coventry, England (the sculpture is on the front of the new improved Coventry Cathedral). We would have used one of Cerebus' photos, but they all have his snout in the foreground. *Fantasy Advertiser* #115 is available from Trident Comics, Unit 3, 28 Canal Street, South Wigston, Leicester, England, U.K. LE8 2PL. £2.50 International money order or certified cheque. UK funds only.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'When critics disagree the artist is in accord with himself.'

Oscar Wilde
preface
to "Picture of
Dorian Gray"